

Class Quest

Zach spent an entire day going over the records of the immortal Classes. Most of them had been achieved by wardens of the past. And only one of them was still alive, it seemed that even when one was immortal, the Infinite Realm found ways to kill people. None of the Classes he read about were anything really incredible. They weren't bad, they were great, but Zach didn't want to be just great, he wanted more. All but one of them were mythic rarity, and the one that was relic was... not exactly what he wanted from his progression.

If Zach could build his own Class, it would be something with high mobility, that could allow him to avoid taking damage. But also allow him to reach his foes quickly and unleash a huge amount of damage in a short amount of time. Currently he could do a lot of damage, but all of it was focused on dealing pushing a lot of low to mid amount of damage in a short amount of time through many smaller attacks. Which was fine for some situations, but he knew that he would be hard pressed to overcome the more powerful defensive powers that could soak up a lot of damage. None of the recorded Classes provided him with anything like that. Still, he decided to at least try to finish the requirements for one of them—the **Riftlord** one. It wasn't exactly what he wanted, but at least it would be a nice back up.

Finally, he sighed and started cleaning up the mess in his room. He knew that he was stalling, but he couldn't help it. He didn't like going to the Dealmaker, something about that place made him feel... strange. He couldn't quite put his finger on it, but aside from the usual way that he acted inside there was also something else. A silent fear of the Dealmaker itself. A being that was incomprehensible, that existed in a realm that Zach had hard time grasping.

He finished stacking the records and his own notes and realized that he had nothing else to use to distract himself and stall. He took a deep breath, then set in a chair and pulled his screens up, navigating

to the shop and then found what he was looking for. He mentally pressed a button and then he was somewhere else.

The transition was always instant, but Zach always needed a few moments to gather himself. He hadn't visited the Dealmaker often, indeed, he avoided it as much as he could. The Dealmaker could grant you great power, for a price, but Zach had always felt like he lost something when he did that.

He found himself in a world of endless shadow, darkness that messed with one's perception. And, as always, all his fears and doubts evaporated. In front of him was a table occupied with a being shrouded in a cloak, with the hood raised up. There was no real way to tell what gender the Dealmaker was, Zach had gone through thinking it either way. He stood there for a moment, just looking at the Dealmaker, the being that had introduced him to the Framework. The being that had announced the end of his old life. In a way, it was funny to Zach now. He had spent a long time hating the Dealmaker, because he had believed that he had stolen his old life away, that he had imposed the Framework on their world. But in truth, reality was never the place in which he lived. Earth was a fantasy, an experiment. Framework was the real reality, shaped by gods themselves, if one could think of them as such—Zach didn't know another word to call them—at least according to the sparse religions of the Infinite Realm. Many had ideas, and thoughts, few had anything really concrete.

"Zacharia," the Dealmaker said as Zach walked forward. "Welcome, it's been a long time."

Zach took the seat in front of the Dealmaker's table and looked in the endless darkness of the Dealmaker's hood. He had never seen anything inside of it, yet the sensation of being watched never abated.

"Dealmaker," Zach greeted in return.

"What can I do for you today?" The Dealmaker asked.

Zach wondered just what the limits of the Dealmaker's power were, did he already know? It didn't seem possible, and yet... Zach shook his head and then focused on the Dealmaker.

"I am here to ask about a Class Quest," Zach said.

“Ah,” the Dealmaker said. “You wish to undertake one?”

“Yes,” Zach said. “I don’t know how it works though, can you explain it to me?”

“It is simple, you can only have one Immortal Class Quest active, if you wish to abandon it and take another you need to return to me. You do not have a time limit on completing the quest.”

Zach nodded his head. “I assume that I can browse through all the Classes that my current Class can evolve into?”

“Of course, but you probably want to narrow it down some,” the Dealmaker said.

Zach took a deep breath and thought about what he wanted. “Does that mean that I can pick a Class with higher rarity than my current one? Is there a limit on what rarity I can take?”

“There is no limit, but of course the quest gets harder the greater the rift between your current rarity and that of the Class you choose.”

Zach grimaced, but... in the end he didn’t want to play it safe. He needed something great and powerful. Something that would give him power. Seeing Ryun again, seeing him fight in the arena. He was behind, which he didn’t mind that much. He liked taking his time to research, to see what he could achieve and how, and then execute his plan quickly.

“Can I... can I see what evolutions my available classes will have in the future?” Zach asked. He didn’t need just a powerful class; he needed a powerful end game.

“Of course,” the Dealmaker said.

“Alright, show me the high damage dealing classes of the relic rarity that I can evolve into,” Zach said at last.

The Dealmaker didn’t move, but orbs appeared behind him, hundreds of them. Zach realized that this wasn’t going to be as easy as he had imagined. There were too many for him to choose easily. He reached out for one on random, focusing on it in his mind and it flew to his hand.

A moment later a window appeared in front of him.

Radiant Knight (Re)

A master at harnessing the
destructive power of the light
plane and unleashing it on their
foes.

Zach grimaced, there wasn't nearly enough for him to be able to make a choice.

"Can't you show me more about the class?" Zach asked.

"Of course, for a price," the Dealmaker said.

Zach sighed. "How much?"

"Ten thousand Greater Essence for the most basic information."

Zach grimaced. He had a bit of Essence, but he didn't have enough to buy the full information on all the Classes that were available to him.

"Give me the basic information for this one," Zach said, a moment later he lost Essence, and the window in front of his eyes changed.

CLASS	DESCRIPTION	POWERS
Radiant Knight	<i>Light be my guide.</i> You are a warrior relying on the powers of light. Able to pull from the Light Plane to boost yourself and your abilities. Specializing in powerful attacks and mobility using light.	Attunement— Lightborn Attributes— Strength/Dexterity

The basic overview was just as the Dealmaker said, basic. An expanded description, the name of the attunement and the main two

attributes. It wasn't nearly enough. He was never seriously considering this Class. This wasn't what he was looking for.

He looked over a few other random Classes, but nothing really stood out to him. Most were focused on a single plane and drawing power from it.

Finally, he glanced at the Dealmaker who had remained silent, waiting patiently. Zach looked over the hundreds of the Classes in front of him, thinking about what he needed. None of them had been anything special, something that could give him the kind of power.

"Can you show me only combat focused Classes?" Zach asked.

Some of the orbs disappeared, not many. His Class evolutions had always been more combat oriented. The Dealmaker sold and traded everything, but there were things that he did allow, information that he did let go through for free. If someone knew to ask the right questions. Like how he could narrow down his Class choices, that in itself gave him information about them.

Zach had spent a lot of time thinking about what his power should be focused around. His evolutions so far were broad, but he felt like he needed to focus on something now. He raised his **Shade Reaver** arm, it was his greatest weapon.

"A merger of the old and the new," the Dealmaker said. "If you want, I can remove it, no payment needed. It was never meant to exist in this reality. The prisoner was not supposed to go free, his punishment for arrogance was an eternity spent imprisoned."

Zach blinked at the Dealmaker, then grimaced as he mentioned the Yeti. Yes, Zach knew that he messed up with him. There was more there, information that perhaps held clues to the reality itself. But Zach already had too much on his plate, trying to solve another puzzle was too much for him now. Yeti was his responsibility, but he did not delude himself into thinking that he could do anything about him now. No, he needed to focus on growth before he could turn to such matters.

Still, he hadn't expected such an offer. Zach didn't think that he would've ever agreed to it. His arm was powerful, it gave him tools that

he needed to fight several tiers above his own. He didn't need to get rid of it, he needed to master it.

"No," Zach told the Dealmaker.

"As you wish."

"Can you show me all the Classes that would synergize well with it?" It was a bit broad as far as question to narrow the Classes down went, and for a moment he thought that the Dealmaker wouldn't respond. Then, the orbs shifted, many disappeared leaving only a handful of them floating behind the Dealmaker.

Zach blinked; he didn't think that there would be so few possible choices.

"This version of the Framework recognizes your arm as an awakened weapon, these are Classes that will work with it," the Dealmaker said. "And two that are not focused on awakened weapons but have some synergy."

Zach looked at each of the Classes, pulling up their sparse descriptions, then immediately discarded two. He read through them and narrowed his choices down to three then he bought their basic information, nearly depleting his Essence.

CLASS	DESCRIPTION	POWERS
Awakened Weapon Master	<i>By my weapon, I am known.</i> You are a warrior who has found perfection in the mastery of a single melee weapon. You seek to unite your body with your weapon, turning you into the ultimate weapon.	Attunement— Awakened Heart Attributes— Dexterity/Strength

CLASS	DESCRIPTION	POWERS
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Rift Champion	<i>Power from the beyond.</i> You are Champion of the plains. Your power draws on the might of different planes of reality to augment your own. A Rift Champion can walk through any plane with little risk and bring power from beyond against his foes.	Attunement—Rift Soul Attributes— Strength/Intelligence
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CLASS	DESCRIPTION	POWERS
Lord of the Aspects	<i>Aspects bow to my will.</i> You are a warrior that seeks to understand and gain command over Aspects. Using your connection with different Aspects you unleash devastating attacks on your foes.	Attunement—Aspectborn Attributes— Strength/Intelligence

He was pretty sure that the first choice focused completely on an awakened weapon, probably improving it and having helping it grow stronger. He didn't know how it would do with his **Shade Reaver**, how the Framework system would adapt to it not quite fitting in. Still, he did consider it.

The second was an continuation on his current Class, from the sound of it more combat focused, which was what he was looking for.

The last was... something about it called to him. The **Shade Reaver** allowed him to steal aspects from shades, and he knew just how powerful having different aspects could be. If he could increase the power of his different aspect further it would make him a lot more powerful. He didn't have an exact idea of what the Class was, but... he already had access to different aspects. If the Class could provide him with buffs to them... It would make the **Shade Reaver** a lot more powerful.

The attributes were an issue, strength and intelligence. Intelligence wasn't as useful of a stat for him, but he did have a lot of it, so if the Class gave him intelligence scaling perks perhaps he could make us them.

He would need to plan out his stat allocation with greater care from now. Bu he was getting ahead of himself. He hadn't even heard what the quest was.

He turned toward the Dealmaker and spoke.

“Can you show me the possible evolutions for the **Lord of the Aspects** Class?” Zach asked.

Orbs appeared behind the Dealmaker, a couple dozen of them. A lot less than before, it made him think that the Class was narrowing down, that it had fewer branching paths. He didn't know if that was good or not. Still, he took the time to look through the choices, and he saw a trend of them either narrowing down to specific aspects or continuing down the empowerment of many. He knew that each of those Classes would have requirements, just like the immortal Class. But he hoped that he would be able to figure them out without taking the Dealmaker's quest every time.

“I'll take the quest for the **Lord of the Aspects** Class,” Zach said, making his choice.

The Dealmaker nodded and then a moment later a window popped up in Zach's vision.

Lord of the Aspects (Re) Quest Available!

Kill nine elementals of different Aspects that are at least three tiers of power above you and of at least mythic rarity: 0/9

Kill six elemental dragons of different Aspects that are at least three tiers of power above you and of at least mythic rarity: 0/6

Visit nine planes of different Aspects that are at least tier 6 and stay there for at least three days: 0/9

Gain any **Master Warrior** title from any faction: 0/1

Zach blinked at the quest. A part of him had expected one big feat, something that he could focus on doing. Instead, it was... several tasks. None of the tasks seemed easy to him, perhaps only the nine planes one. Also it seemed that it didn't count his previous achievements, but that was fine with him.

"Thank you," Zach said. This wasn't something that he would accomplish quickly, but he felt that it would be worth it in the end.

"Of course. You will need to accomplish the tasks in the quest by yourself, aside from the last one of course. You may have help in preparing but the tasks themselves must be accomplished by you alone." The Dealmaker paused, then spoke again. "Anything else I can do for you?"

Zach was about to shake his head when he paused. He looked at the endless darkness inside the Dealmaker's hood and then asked a question.

"Why did Ryun turn into a monster back on Earth?" Zach didn't really expect an answer, what he expected was a price that was something that he had no way of paying. So, when the Dealmaker started speaking Zach could barely believe it.

"You expect an easy answer? You expect me to tell you that it was focus madness or something in the same vein? The truth is never so simple. He was filled with grief and anger, he killed people because he hated them. Was there more to it, a foreign influence? Yes. Was it the only thing that drove him to do the things he did? No."

Zach closed his eyes. He had made his peace with Earth, he had set it aside knowing that it was not his fault. He was not responsible for Ryun's actions, he had known that. "Could I have helped him?"

"What was, was," the Dealmaker said. "What is, is. Perhaps you could've, perhaps you couldn't have. Just trying would not guarantee success."

Zach nodded his head. It was the last thing he needed to hear in order to set aside that part of his life. To put it behind him and look to the future. For a moment he debated asking for more about what it was that influenced Ryun, but in the end he stopped himself. It didn't matter, and as the Dealmaker said, it was still Ryun. Knowing would not change what had been done.

"Thank you for answering, for not asking for Essence," he said, wondering why the Dealmaker had done that. But who was he to know the mind of a being such as that?

A few moments later he found himself back in the real world, his quest still in front of his eyes. He looked at it and fixed it in his mind. That was his next goal, the first step to gaining enough power that he could protect all those who needed it.

He pushed the quest away, and then stood. He headed to bed, tomorrow was the day when Naha was supposed to return as someone else, a different identity. Nyathulla would die on a mission, days or months from now. A part of him was glad for it, he had failed her, had been too slow to save her. But he could only walk forward, hoping to do better than he had yesterday.

Soon the Tournament would continue, and he needed a clear head if he was going to help his team move past the first round.